

November 25, 2013

John Carver
Co-Chair, STEM Advisory Council's Broadband Committee

Robert von Wolffradt
Co-Chair, STEM Advisory Council's Broadband Committee

RE: Support For Streamlined Tower Siting Processes

Dear Chairmen Carver and von Wolffradt,

On behalf of CTIA-The Wireless Association®, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I am writing to express CTIA's support for the inclusion of provisions that would streamline the tower siting process in the Broadband Committee's policy recommendations to the Governor. In early September, Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds announced their new "Connect Every Iowan" initiative, with the intent to "increase the access, adoption, and use of broadband technology" and "to encourage broadband build-out throughout Iowa, particularly in unserved or underserved areas."¹ In order to facilitate broadband build-out, it is imperative that provisions that streamline the wireless tower siting process are major considerations. Iowa's broadband build-out is in the best interest of businesses, state and local government agencies perhaps, most importantly, the residents of Iowa.

Demand for wireless broadband is growing exponentially as new applications, devices and technologies consume more bandwidth and attract more subscribers. Wireless providers continue to invest in, build out and upgrade networks to compete on network quality. Since 1985, U.S. wireless carrier's cumulative capital expenditures totaled more than \$365 billion nationally, an increase of more than \$30 billion over the preceding 12-month period despite the challenging economic climate.² From energy usage to telecommuting to educational and governmental access, wireless broadband promises to increase efficiency, connectivity and information-sharing. The economic and societal benefits brought about by wireless broadband require a robust infrastructure backbone, which in turn requires the ability to deploy wireless facilities where they are needed. In fact, to address these needs, 2012 saw the construction of an additional 18,394 cell sites, totaling 301,779 operational cell sites by year-end 2012, an increase of nearly 10% over the preceding 12-month period.³

Wireless communications are also a key component of the nation's "9-1-1" emergency response system. CTIA estimates that there are more than 400,000 wireless 9-1-1 calls made every single day. Emergency communications networks are updating public safety systems to "Next-Generation 9-1-1" technologies that will allow for new services and devices to complete calls to our nation's 9-1-1 centers. Like all broadband-based technologies, Next Generation 9-1-1 requires comprehensive infrastructure deployment.

Recent federal and state recognition of the importance of wireless infrastructure bears consideration by the Committee as well. In its National Broadband Plan, the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") acknowledges that wireless infrastructure is critical for broadband deployment. The FCC's

¹ "Connect Every Iowan," <https://governor.iowa.gov/connect/>, last accessed 11/19/2013.

² CTIA-The Wireless Association®, "CTIA Semi-Annual Year-End 2012 Top-Line Survey Results", http://files.ctia.org/pdf/CTIA_Survey_YE_2012_Graphics-FINAL.pdf, last accessed 11/11/2013.

³ *Ibid.*

National Broadband Plan states that wireless networks rely on site deployment, and that securing rights to infrastructure deployment “is often a difficult and time-consuming process that discourages private investment.”⁴ To expedite this process, the FCC established a “shot clock” requiring local governments to make final decisions on proposed wireless facilities on existing structures within ninety (90) days and on new tower proposals within one hundred fifty (150) days of receipt of a complete application.⁵ Former FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski pointed to the red tape and delays entailed in the wireless siting process, and observed that expediting wireless siting could unleash \$11.5 billion in new broadband infrastructure investment in 2011-2012.⁶ In February 2012, Congress acknowledged the critical role of timely wireless facilities deployment by requiring streamlined local government approval for such facilities on existing structures.⁷

In closing, as wireless providers deploy 4G high-speed mobile broadband services to address exploding consumer demand, they need the administrative certainty to construct new wireless facilities and collocate on existing wireless facilities whenever possible. These facilities are increasingly critical to network performance as users demand these high-speed services, both in the home and on-the-go. Inclusion of provisions that would streamline the tower siting process across the state of Iowa would significantly enable the deployment of mobile broadband. For these reasons, we respectfully request that provisions to streamline the tower siting process be included in the Committee’s final recommendations to the Governor.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Bethanne Cooley
Director, State Legislative Affairs
CTIA-The Wireless Association ®

cc: Amy Kuhlers, Connect Iowa, State Program Manager

⁴ *Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan* at 127 (March 17, 2010), available at: <http://www.broadband.gov/plan/>.

⁵ See Declaratory Ruling to Clarify Provisions of Section 332(c)(7)(B) to Ensure Timely Siting Review and to Preempt Under Section 253 State and Local Ordinances that Classify All Wireless Siting Proposals as Requiring a Variance (Nov. 18, 2009), available at: <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7020393456>. More recently, a federal court affirmed the FCC’s “shot clock,” concluding that the 90-day and 150-day timeframes were lawful and noting evidence by CTIA and others supporting the FCC’s conclusion that wireless service providers often face lengthy delays in the collocation and new wireless facility zoning applications. See *Arlington, TX vs. FCC*, No. 10- 60039 (Jan. 23, 2012), available at: <http://image.exct.net/lib/fefd167774640c/m/1/Shot+Clock+Order+CA5+Jan++23+2012.pdf>.

⁶ Prepared Remarks of FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski at the Broadband Acceleration Conference, Washington, D.C., at 3 (Feb. 9, 2011), available at http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-304571A1.pdf.

⁷ See Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 § 6409(a) (A “state or local government may not deny, and shall approve, any eligible facilities request for a modification of an existing wireless tower or base station that does not substantially change the physical dimensions of the tower or base station”) (“Middle Class Tax Relief Act § 6409(a)”), available at: <http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20120213/CRPT-112hrpt-HR3630.pdf>.

